

Press Release of the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary held on January 12, 2023.

Opening and Roll Call.

The chairman of the Board, Rev. John Louwse, led in opening devotions. The governors were all present, except for Alan Datema who was absent with notice, and Rev. Clarence VanderVelde who was late because of car trouble. Dr. Jason Van Vliet was present as principal and administrative assistant Leanne Kuizenga was present to take the minutes of the meeting.

Memorabilia

Information was shared about the personal circumstances of emeriti professors, as well as widows and families of professors.

Minutes and Agenda

The minutes of the regular meeting held on September 8, 2022 were approved. The agenda for the meeting was established. Outstanding matters on the action log were reviewed.

Decisions, Reports, Agenda Items

1. With gratitude to the Lord it is noted that Dr. Reuben Bredenhof and his family have arrived in Hamilton. The Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church of Hamilton officially called Dr. Bredenhof to be set aside as professor of Ministry and Mission at the Seminary. He has accepted this call and his colloquium and installation as Minister of the Word at Cornerstone are planned for March, and his installation as Professor of Ministry and Mission is planned for the upcoming CRTS convocation in September.
2. Faculty workload has been addressed with the hiring of a teaching assistant. This has been of tremendous benefit to our professors. Yet an increased student body means more marking and increased commitments in the spiritual formation program (which involves our professors mentoring students). The Senate and Board need to continue to monitor and address the issue of faculty workload.
3. The Senate of CRTS proposed a new policy for the admission of mature students. This was in response to Synod Guelph 2022's decision to authorize the Board of Governors "to review current policies regarding admission standards for mature students." Previously, all students were required to have a bachelor's degree to enroll at CRTS. The new policy proposes that mature applicants (being at least 30 years old) may be admitted if they have completed at least six semester length courses of undergraduate studies from an accredited institution. In addition to this the applicant must also satisfy the existing requirements that are in place for Hebrew and Greek, and demonstrate the ability to pursue graduate level study by submitting an essay or paper on an assigned topic. This policy was adopted on a trial basis until after the Board has reported on this matter to General Synod 2025.
4. The board addressed the issue of succession planning. Longer term, we will need to replace our professors. The Board asked the Senate to formalize the process of identifying students with the potential to pursue further studies. We also need to make the churches aware of the need for future professors, and to encourage them to support those pastors deemed qualified for further studies (even though this involves sacrifices on behalf of the local congregation). There was some discussion about setting up a bursary fund or making other arrangements for the financial support of students interested in doing further studies.

5. The committee appointed to investigate the feasibility of an Australian CRTS affiliate campus presented an extensive report. A decision was made to refine this report so that it may be used in further discussions with the Australian deputies for training for the ministry.
6. The executive committee updated the Board on Dr. Ted Van Raalte's health circumstances and his teaching load for the second semester. The Board is working with the doctor's recommendations to allow Dr. Van Raalte a gradual, sustainable return to work. The Board is thankful for the continued progress made in his recovery!
7. The Academic Committee passed on the minutes of their past meeting. They were received for information.
8. Rev. Clarence VanderVelde and Dr. Jeff Temple reported on lecture visits to CRTS on November 22-23, 2022, as well as on visits with professors. These reports were received with thankfulness.
9. The Finance and Property Committee provided minutes of the recent meetings they held. A construction update was given. The goal is for classes to be taught in our own building again by mid-March. Thankfulness was expressed for the use of the Maranatha Free Reformed church building.
10. Providence Canadian Reformed Church consulted with representatives of the Board about our interest in pursuing a combined-use facility with them. This was sent back to the Finance and Property committee for further consideration.
11. A report was submitted to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) on ensuring institutional vitality and educational effectiveness. It outlined CRTS's process of strategic planning and assessment, and the financial model by which our seminary is funded, budgeting procedures, compensation models, and workload. ATS received this report and gave a very positive evaluation of it.
12. An assessment was provided on the effectiveness of the work of the Board and its committees. It appears that the Board is functioning well. An oral report was provided on follow-up on the evaluation of our principal's work. Thankfulness was expressed for our principal's capable leadership.
13. The Governance Committee sent a proposal on our handbook's mandate for strategic planning to the Board for final approval. This proposal was approved.
14. Dr. Jason Van Vliet presented his principal's report. Faculty, staff, and students are looking forward to all being under one roof again, the Lord willing, by mid-March. The student body consists of more married men than in the past. Fifteen babies were born in the 2022 calendar year in the CRTS community. The past semester the student body experienced a more-than-usual amount of sickness, including having some young children hospitalized for a time. The first week of the January interim semester involved a focus on church planting. A prospective students' event is planned for Feb.23 &24 for students interested in studying at CRTS along with their wives or girlfriends. Overall, faculty and staff are doing well.
15. Dr. Cornelis Van Dam reported on his attendance at the Evangelical Theological Society conference, and Dr. Ted Van Raalte on his attendance at a conference organized by professors from the Theological University in Kampen on the writings of Guido de Bres. These reports were received with thankfulness.

Press release and Closing.

The completion of the Press Release was delegated to the vice-chairman in consultation with the Executive and the Principal. Rev. Julius Van Spronsen closed the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,
Rev. Joe Poppe (Vice-chairman/Corresponding Clerk)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Poppe", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned below the typed name and title.